



STATE OF VERMONT
Department of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

Physical Education Uses Technology to Engage Students

MONTPELIER – Three Vermont high schools were granted heart rate monitors and the supporting technology for their physical education programs, the Vermont Department of Education announced today.

Leland and Gray Union High School, Middlebury Union High School, and Rutland Senior High School were granted a total of \$26,993 to purchase and implement heart rate monitor equipment and software for high school physical education.

"This technology supports a contemporary model of physical education that shifts away from competitive and team sports to one that promotes individual, lifelong fitness for all students," said physical education consultant Lindsay Simpson. "The heart rate monitors are very engaging for youth. Continuous feedback keeps them motivated and cues the user to adjust physical activity intensity to meet personal goals."

Current research also suggests that a fitness-oriented physical education program can contribute to improved academic performance. Aerobic training has been shown to produce many cognitive and behavioral benefits including improved focus, concentration, and impulse control¹. The heart rate monitors also allow for collaboration with other content areas. For example, students can use their heart rate data for lessons in statistics or physiology. Therefore, the goals of the heart rate monitor grant program are to:

1. Document and increase the amount of time high school students spend engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity during physical education;
2. Develop student self-knowledge, personal goal-setting and fitness planning skills for lifetime physical activity; and
3. Develop students' 21st century skills of tracking, interpreting and evaluating personal physical activity effort with objective, technological measures.

The heart rate monitor grants, awarded as a result of a competitive proposal process, are legislated in Act 161 of 2004, an act promoting wellness in Vermont schools. For more information contact Lindsay Simpson, Physical Education Consultant (802) 828-1461 or lindsay.simpson@state.vt.us.

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¹ *Active Education: Physical Education, Physical Activity and Academic Performance*. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Research Brief, summer 2009. <http://www.rwjf.org/childhoodobesity/product.jsp?id=48968>